



***Aboriginal news from across Turtle Island and beyond
July 15-19, 2013***

First Nations '60's scoop' lawsuit heads to trial: Plaintiffs say they don't want children to be robbed of their cultural heritage ever again

[CBC News](#)

Jul 17, 2013 10:51 AM ET



Beaverhouse First Nation Chief Marcia Brown Martel was one of about 16,000 Aboriginal children taken from their families in what is often called the Sixties Scoop. She said she is relieved that the class action lawsuit against the federal government she tried to start years ago will finally go ahead. (Supplied)

A Toronto lawyer representing Aboriginal people taken from their families during the so-called "Sixties Scoop" say they deserve the same acknowledgement given to residential school survivors.

On Tuesday, the Ontario Superior Court of Justice ruled a class-action lawsuit against the federal government can proceed to trial.

Jeffery Wilson said about 16,000 Aboriginal children in Ontario were sent to live in non-Aboriginal homes between 1965 and 1985.

"The motivating issue for the representative plaintiffs is less about money and more about taking steps that assures this cannot happen again."

Wilson said the children were robbed of their Aboriginal culture, language and identity and are suffering the consequences as adults.

'What happened to them was wrong'

Beaverhouse First Nation Chief Marcia Brown Martel was one of those thousands of children who were taken from their families.

"My biological family was given the information that I was mentally handicapped," she said.

"That's what the social workers told my family."

Authorities sent Brown Martel to live with a non-Aboriginal family in southern Ontario, where she grew up without any connection to First Nations culture or language.

"I cannot be, nor am I, the person that I would have been," she said.

Brown Martel and another plaintiff, Robert Commanda, began their attempt to launch a class action lawsuit against the Attorney General of Canada four years ago.

Wilson said his clients hope proceeding to trial will ultimately result in "a ruling that really says that what happened to them was wrong and shouldn't have occurred."

Like residential schools, the "Sixties Scoop" stole the Aboriginal identity of an entire generation, he said.

"It's hard to reconcile how the Prime Minister or how Canada can say 'we're sorry' for the effect in respect to the residential schools case and not offer the same form of acceptance ... of these persons' harm and suffering."

Brown Martel said she hopes the trial will bring some assurance "that this will never be, ever, ever allowed in this country to ... happen [to] any children."

Now that the lawsuit has been granted certification, Wilson said he hopes other affected people will come forward.

"Any Aboriginal person who was placed in a non-Aboriginal home between 1964 and 1985 ... can register to be a participant in this class action," he said.

Phone, internet problems affect Cree vote for Grand Chief: Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come faces two challengers: Jack Blacksmith and Ashley Iserhoff

[CBC News](#)

Jul 15, 2013 6:50 PM ET



Having served 18 years as Grand Chief Incumbent Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come (right) is seeking another mandate from voters. (CBC)

Voters are still waiting for results in the Cree Grand Council elections.

This is due to a telecommunications outage.

Yesterday a fibre optic cable cut off phone and internet service to several Cree communities.

This caused difficulties in the tabulation of the votes. Chief Electoral Officer Lawrence Jimiken has said that results will be made public later today.

Telebec has confirmed that a fibre optic cable was broken yesterday between Matagami and km 72 of the James Bay Highway.

Telebec spokesperson, Doris Blackburn, says a construction crew probably damaged the fibre optic line without realizing it.

That means no cell phone coverage or internet for clients of Telebec and Telus.

More than 12,000 people were eligible to cast a ballot in nine Cree communities as well as centres outside Eeyou Istchee such as Montreal, Ottawa and Val d'Or.

This year's election was set to feature voting by telephone in addition to paper ballots. The outage still raises the question of what will happen to those who planned to dial in their vote.

Grand Chief has served 18 years

There are three candidates running for Grand Chief: Incumbent Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come, the president of the Cree Mineral Exploration Board, businessman Jack Blacksmith, and the current Deputy Grand Chief Ashley Iserhoff.

Coon Come has been Grand Chief for a total of 18 years and recently negotiated a governance agreement that gives the Cree more power over Category 2 and 3 lands in the James Bay region. Bill 42 also creates the regional government of Cree and non-native called the Eeyou-Istchee James Bay government that will take effect on January 1st, 2014.

Ashley Iserhoff, the current deputy grand chief, is stressing the need for a new, more youthful voice to take over the running of the Cree Nation. At 38, he is promising to help make sure young people benefit from development happening in territory.

Jack Blacksmith says he is hoping his experience in business and many years as head of CREECo, the economic development arm of the Cree Regional Authority, will connect with voters.

Eight people are running for Deputy Grand Chief: Robert Kitchen, Kenny Loon, Rodney Mark, Christopher Napash, Roger Sandy, Linda Shecapio, Emma Virginia Wabano and Bertie Wapachee

Youth vote important, as Cree youth gain in numbers

During the 2009 Grand Council elections, the participation rate was 52.9 per cent. This was an increase from the previous election but a total that many Cree said was too low.

With 70 per cent of Crees under the age of 34, the youth vote could be very important in this election. Traditionally, youth have had a very poor turnout in Grand Council elections.

Stacey Bear, former Youth Grand Chief, thinks it will be different this time around thanks in part to Facebook and other social media.

"What we will decide today is very important for the people in the future, such as our children. Even if I don't want to vote, I still have to for my child. I have to make to decision on "who will think of my child," she said.

A candidate needs to 50 per cent plus 1 to win the election. If no candidate wins that percentage in the first vote, a run-off election will be held.

Ojibwe Language Project spreads in Bemidji

[Crookston Daily Times](#)

July 15, 2013, 1:01 am

Trent Opstedahl

BEMIDJI, Minn. (AP) — In 2005, two volunteers set out on a mission to reconstruct a language native to the Bemidji area that had slowly deteriorated throughout the centuries.

Nearly 10 years later, Michael Meuers and Rachelle Houle have come a long way in resurrecting the Ojibwe language here, enlisting more than 150 area businesses to participate in the Bemidji Ojibwe Language Project, the Bemidji Pioneer reported (<http://bit.ly/1boyCS3>).

"The Ojibwe language is the culture of our land," Meuers said. "There's something to learn here from their culture."

All across town, a number of businesses have erected signs with certain phrases from the Ojibwe language to promote racial diversity.

Surrounded by three American Indian communities, Meuers and Houle said many community members know very little about their neighbors, and that the subtle addition of the Ojibwe language can help bring about conversations that can sometimes be uncomfortable to bring about.

"It opens up opportunity for everyone to talk and communicate with one another," Meuers said.

Additionally, Houle said she has always sensed tension in the communities.

"Growing up in Bemidji, I always felt like the two cultures never meshed together very well," she said.

With the intention of providing educational opportunities and easing racial tension between American Indians and the greater Bemidji community, Meuers and Houle devote many of their Tuesday afternoons spreading the word of their cause to as many as people as they can.

Handing out informational material to business owners, the two volunteers said their mission isn't to fulfill personal agendas, but rather to bring about awareness on Bemidji's long history with Ojibwe culture.

"It was here long before any of the Europeans settled," Houle said. "We know people are interested, but they don't always know how to go about learning more about it because of fear of offending someone."

And according to Meuers, this fear should not have an effect on people's desire to learn and eventually grow from a culture.

Living in Hawaii for a time, Meuers said the connection to past and present cultures is evident, and hopes Bemidji and the Ojibwe culture can someday mirror that connection.

"My hope is that someday 'boozhoo' (Ojibwe for greetings or hello) will be synonymous with Bemidji the same way 'aloha' is synonymous with Hawaii," he said.

Meuers said part of the idea to embark on the language immersion project came from the 2005 Red Lake school shooting tragedy, when he suggested to a former Bemidji city manager the city should fly the Red Lake flag at half staff as a sign of respect and sympathy. The flag was flown for a week.

"I had never heard such positive feedback from the Red Lake people as I did that day," said Meuers, who works in public relations for the Red Lake Band of Chippewa government. "It then occurred to me symbolism is extremely powerful, even in all of its simplicity."

As a result of the project, the Ojibwe language now adorns many businesses' outdoor signs and doors, as well as interior walls, windows and doors, in a way unique to each business.

Houle and Meuers said the Bemidji Ojibwe Language Project has ballooned into a much larger venture than they could ever have envisioned.

"It's exciting to see more and more businesses make permanent (Ojibwe language) additions to their structures," Houle said.

According to Houle, some of the "permanent additions" consist of vinyl window stickers and plastic signs.

The language project started as a subcommittee of Shared Vision -- a group formed to improve race dynamics in Bemidji. After Shared Vision merged with Bemidji Area Race Relations (BARR), Meuers and Houle said they made sure the language project would continue no matter what.

Hoping to see more Ojibwe signage in schools and towns across the county, Houle said Bemidji can be an example of how successful the incorporation of the Ojibwe language can be.

Citing Bemidji High School, which has added numerous Ojibwe signs to its facility, Houle said she and Meuers were able to raise more than enough funds to get the ball rolling on the high school's language immersion program, even though the school took on most of the costs.

"Our goal has evolved beyond signs," Meuers said.

Referencing Anton Treuer, professor of languages and ethnic studies at Bemidji State University, Meuers said the Bemidji Ojibwe Language Project has also become an "important cog" in the scheme of teaching the Ojibwe language and culture.

In his book, "Everything You Wanted to Know About Indians But Were Afraid to Ask," Treuer, who is also director of the American Indian Resource Center at BSU, mentions the significant role the project has had in relieving cultural tension in the area.

Meuers said the project and the book resulted in an open forum where the community was invited to ask questions about Ojibwe culture.

"Both cultures have fears about each other," Houle said. "This project has been about creating better race relations."

Continuing their weekly Tuesday visits to spread awareness about their cause, the cultural advocates said the Bemidji Ojibwe Language Project is far from over.

"We're doing this because we think it's the right thing to do," Meuers said. "We want Bemidji to be known for its Ojibwe culture, just like it's known for Paul and Babe and being the first city on the Mississippi."

Army goes from mentoring Afghan forces to training aboriginal youth

[Courier-Islander](#)

July 13, 2013



Graduates of a week-long course involving 24 aboriginal youth, who were given in-community training by soldiers of the Royal Canadian Regiment, stand on parade Friday, July 12, 2013 at the Zhibaahaasing First Nation, on western Manitoulin Island. Canadian soldiers have gone from mentoring Afghan troops to instructing aboriginal youth in a program the outgoing commander of the army wants to see expanded to hard-pressed First Nations communities across the country. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Murray Brewster

MANITOULIN ISLAND, Ont. - It was an old-style homecoming parade that left a lump in the throat of Chief Irene Kells.

Marching up the dusty road of the Zhibaaahaasing First Nation, under a blinding sun, and to the cheering of their families came 24 young people, who'd spent a week in the bush of western Manitoulin Island.

Leading them was a handful of soldiers belonging to the 1st Battalion Royal Canadian Regiment.

Troops whose mission had been to mentor Afghan forces found themselves cast as instructors and role models for teenagers in a remote northern Ontario community on the edge.

The teenagers, some of whom also came from the nearby First Nation community M'Chigeeng, spent a week amid the ragged forests and scrub of the island bring taught basic soldiering, survival and, perhaps most importantly, teamwork.

It was an important test case, not only for an army in search of a mission, but for aboriginal communities with high unemployment, few job prospects and, according to Statistics Canada, a burgeoning, uneasy youth population.

"When I saw you coming up the road, my heart was so happy," Kells said with tears in her eyes. "I am just so happy you guys had a chance to go out and experience something new."

The deputy minister of aboriginal and northern affairs attended the graduation ceremony for the teenagers Friday and noted the growing aboriginal youth population represent a "huge opportunity" for the labour force as baby boomers retire, but also a bit of a risk because idle young people can be a recipe for social unrest.

"We've got to get the public policy mix right," Michael Wernick told army staff who organized the camp.

The army's soon-to-be retiring commander, Lt.-Gen. Peter Devlin, said he would like to see the program extended voluntarily to other hard-pressed communities across the country, and was looking for buy-in from other federal departments.

"I think Canadian Army soldiers are gifted trainers, gifted professionals at sharing their leadership abilities," Devlin said. "They share Canadian values, military values in particular; integrity, discipline, courage, respect. All of it is being reinforced with you aboriginal kids."

For the last 25 years, National Defence has run four, extensive summer camp programs for aboriginal youth at bases across the country. But those boot camps are more extensive and geared perhaps towards steering those young people into a military career.

The difference between that and what went on last week at Manitoulin Island was that instead of coming to the army, the army went to the community with an emphasis was on developing leadership.

"I think there are some communities across the land that would benefit from a partnership with the Canadian Army, where the army comes in and provides that training, that education and the sharing of those values in communities that want it," said Devlin.

The lesson wasn't lost on Ontario's Lt.-Gov. David Onley, who attended the graduation ceremony and reminded the young people they were the future leaders of the community.

Kells, who spent over 20 years as chief, said the exercise doesn't mean all of the teenagers will choose a career path in the military, but instead will help them open new doors beyond their existence in the community.

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Aboriginal leaders chart a course for the future

[Vancouver Sun](#)

July 12, 2013

Frank Peebles

Today's aboriginal elders fought back against colonial oppression so effectively that tomorrow's aboriginal children are poised to see the historic record set straight.

According to Tl'azt'en Nation grand chief Ed John, one of Canada's leading aboriginal leadership figures, the elders at the 37th B.C. Elders Gathering in Prince George this week were responsible for a centuries-old message finally being heard: mainstream Canadian governments "can't simply do whatever you want in our lands anymore."

He challenged aboriginal Canadians to keep the momentum going. "Let them know we own all this land, not just little parts of it (reserves). We are willing to share it, but what happened was, the people we shared it with took over and seemed to think it was theirs," he said. "Now we have to fight to turn around that thinking, to straighten out the record."

Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs president Stewart Phillip said Canada was guilty of "ugly experiments to obliterate indigenous languages and cultures" but now, due to the perseverance of the elders, they are culturally healing from the atrocities of residential schools and helping mainstream Canada recognize its own mistakes.

New mistakes are still being made, however, through what he called the "industrial agenda" that must be opposed "if it is at the expense of indigenous rights, at the expense of the democratic process for all Canadians, and at the expense of our grandchildren's birthright."

Assembly of First Nations regional representative Jody Wilson-Raybould pointed out how far First Nations have come and how fast.

"It was not long ago it would have been illegal to gather like this, and impossible to become a lawyer as I have without disenfranchisement." But, she added, "of course we aspire to more than just survival."

Foremost among the problems, all the main speakers agreed, is the Indian Act, the federal legislation that Wilson-Raybould urged everyone - aboriginal and non-aboriginal alike - to lobby for its removal.

"Get rid of the colonizer," she said about the federal law. "We are inherently political people and we live in a political world. No other Canadian is a ward of the state, so we are forced to be political."

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A Tribe Called Red Want White Fans To 'Please Stop' Wearing Redface 'Indian' Costumes To Shows

[HuffPost Canada Music](#)

July 12, 2013

Trevor Risk



Most of the professional difficulties that Ian Campeau (AKA DeeJay NDN) of first nations DJ crew A Tribe Called Red faces aren't that of the usual show-booking or money-making variety. The act is insanely popular, selling out gigs all over the world, getting support from EDM impresario Diplo, and indexed on the Polaris Prize long list for the second straight year.

No, what has been the group's tallest mountain to scale has been the reconciliation of attitudes towards a group of young, aboriginal men bluntly incorporating both sound and imagery of their race into their music and performances. Lately, it's escalated, with the band pleading online with their non-aboriginal fans to discontinue wearing headdresses to the shows; taking on the city of Nepean, Ontario's football team's racist name; and facing the intense backlash that has hit them square in the face.

Now that you guys are touring the world, playing heavily attended shows in places like Detroit, and across Europe, you've started to recognize attendees dressing in first nations headdresses, yes?

Yeah. It was a trend that started before we were touring or making albums. But now that we're touring more and playing more festivals, we're starting to see them more, unfortunately.

Are they the kind of headdresses one might find for a child's costume; made of plastic feathers, or are they more elaborate, or authentic?

Yeah. The majority of them are costume variety but some are more elaborate, very non-specific to any Nation though.

So what's the part about them that you and your counterparts are finding the most offensive? Is it the lack of specific nation represented, or is it that it's by non-First Nations wearing them, or something else?

Both and more. It's creating a false idea of what it means to be Indigenous today. It's "Pan-Indianism". It's robbing the First Nations of their nationhoods and nationality. It's making us all "Indian" instead of recognizing me as an Anishnabe or Ojibway. I'm NOT an "Indian". I'm of the Anishnabe Nation. Also, it gives the impression that Natives are something from the past. Not here today. If you were to think of an "Indian" you certainly aren't going to think of me, tattooed in a hoodie with a Sens cap on. We, as First Nation people, have never had control of our image in colonial media since its birth.

But you use the name "Deejay Ndn", and your act is called "A Tribe Called Red". Do you use those names as a type of sarcasm?

"A Tribe Called Red" we came up specifically to appeal to both Natives on the Rez and to the Urban Aboriginals. "A Tribe Called.." has been used for years by different drum groups and Nations on letterman jackets and such. [i.e. A Tribe Called Mi'kmaq] So we knew the term would be recognized by Natives in rural and isolated communities as well as the obvious "A Tribe Called Quest" reference to the First Nations in urban settings.

Right, but you say that you're "not an Indian" but your moniker is DeeJay Ndn.

"NDN" is a spelling for "Indian" that I have only seen used by Indigenous youth. It was also something that would be recognizable to rural FN youth and urban FN youth. Like Keith Secola's anthem "NDN Car."

So it's reclamation of the word? Like "queer" or "nigga"?

NDN also stands for "Never Die Native" which is in retaliation for "the only good Indian is a dead Indian." It can be seen as a reclamation. I prefer to use the term "decolonization."

What about the fact that your merch has headdresses on them? Your "Electric Pow Wow" shirt has a man in a headdress on it. Is it specific to a certain nation?

It's not cultural appropriation if it's your own culture, right?

So you're saying, if first nations individuals or leaders were to show up in headdresses, even if they are plastic feathered ones, it would be couth, but being that it's young, white, EDM fans, that doesn't wash.

Yes. Exactly. But it has yet to happen. I have yet to speak to someone who is First Nation who wears fake headdresses and war paint to EDM concerts. It's "redface." Just like "blackface".

Do you ever address these fans at shows, either during or after you're finished performing?

Absolutely. We played at the Electric Forest Festival in Grand Rapids, Michigan last week and there were plenty of "hipster" headdresses in attendance. We had a traditional male dancer come out and dance for two songs. I made a point to "Hey guys in your fake headdresses, this is what it really looks like. You're headdresses are fake and this is real." Not sure they got the point but it was addressed on stage in front of a festival audience.

If you and your partners could address all those who attend in headdresses in one statement, what would you say?

"Please stop. It's disrespectful and we really don't appreciate it." That's about all we can say at the moment. We're in the middle of our civil rights movement right now, today. So hopefully, in a couple decades, "redface" and terms like "Redskin" and "Indian" will go way of "blackface", and terms like "nigger" and become tabooed in North American society.

Chief Perry Bellegarde addresses First Nation gatherings

[Prince Albert Daily Herald](#)

July 12, 2013

Jessica Iron Joseph

I'd read about the National Treaty Gathering in Onion Lake July 14-18, being held at the same time as the AFN gathering in Whitehorse, and these seemingly opposing groups. I wondered how bad it really was. Fortunately, one of the chiefs, who will be attending both meetings, responded to my interview request. Rather than taking excerpts of FSIN Chief Perry Bellegarde's quotes, I'm leaving the interview intact for readers to draw their own conclusions.

JI: I understand you're attending both meetings. Do you expect there'll be a lot of difference between the two?

CPB: I don't expect a lot of difference. The treaty gathering in Onion Lake is an annual gathering. We've had the treaties 1-11 gathering for years now. It's a movement. It's something that's just an annual gathering.

JI: Oh really? I thought it was something different?

CPB: No, no, no. The treaty 1-11 movement has been on for years. Last year it was hosted in Manitoba in Treaty 2, the year before that it was in Treaty 7. The year before that it was in Treaty 5. Treaty 6 in Onion Lake is hosting it this year.

JI: I guess the media was really spinning it differently then ...

CPB: Yes. Anytime leadership comes together with the grassroots people, the men, the youth, the women and the Elders, there's ceremony because treaties are ceremonies. That has to lead us. And that's a good thing. Every time we come together, whether it's in Onion Lake or in Whitehorse, we focus on: How do we strategize and present our strategy, to bring about transformational change in this country and this land? Because treaty relationship was one of peaceful coexistence and mutual respect between Indigenous peoples and the non-Indigenous peoples. And we're supposed to jointly benefit from sharing the lands and resource wealth. Unfortunately you don't see that happening in 2013. What you see is one side benefiting, the non-Indigenous side, and on the Indigenous side, you see poverty, and we see all the negative statistics; children in poverty. A recent study came out - those statistics are not acceptable. The quality of life for Indigenous peoples is not the same as everybody else. You know, of 30,000 kids in care, 15,000 of those are First Nations kids. The gaps in education funding basically mean you can't have proper teachers on the reserve, you can't have math and science, you can't have books in the libraries, and you can't have access to sports and recreation. Then people wonder why you don't have the same graduation rates on reserve? It's

because the resources aren't the same. And then the high suicide rates -- it's terrible.

So everybody's going to start talking about: how do we change that? How do we bring about that transformational change? It's not the AFN or the FSIN that are making these unilateral impositions of legislation. It's not the Indian organizations that are cutting back on funding. It's not the Indian organizations that aren't doing anything with the apology from the government. It's the Harper government that's doing all these things. So energy should be directed accordingly.

JI: Ok, but from what I read in the papers, these First Nations leaders seemed so split. It seemed like this treaty gathering was born out of a discontentment, because some leaders didn't like how the AFN meets with the government, so those leaders were trying to initiate a different approach. What do you think?

CPB: You're always going to have that, but AFN and FSIN are lobby organizations. You have to meet with government in order to change their minds and hopefully bring about change in policy and legislation. So you have to meet to have those dialogues. And hopefully through that dialogue you bring about a change of minds and hearts, so that changes can be looked at and implemented.

As First Nations leaders, we have so many challenges across this land. We must keep using our Elders, traditions and teachings. We must encourage and support things and processes that unite us, rather than divide us. We've got to be resistant to being sources of divisiveness amongst ourselves, because government will just use that and divide and conquer, even more than they are now. But when we stand shoulder to shoulder, we're strengthening our solidarity. And we're stronger united. That's why I'm attending both gatherings.

JI: Can you comment on the current chief systems? Do you think they're effective when they're modelled after Canadian governments?

CPB: Well, with FSIN, that's why I wanted to change our name to Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations. In our model of FSIN, we have Executive Council, we have the Senate, and we have our Legislative Assembly. It's modelled after the white man's government. We need to go back to our Indigenous laws, Creator's laws and our lodges, to guide us. You've got to involve everyone. There's a role and place for everyone. In most organizations, it's just the chief that speaks because the chief is head of state. It's the highest office. Like Little Black Bear, where I'm from, that office was so high he was able to enter into a treaty with the Crown. So you have to respect that office. But at every forum you've got to make space for the women's voice to be heard because they are keepers of the land and the water. And it's important to have. You know all of our ceremonies, half are male and half are female. We have to respect that Creator's teaching; make room for the women's

voice to be heard, as well as the youth and the Elders. So every forum I go to, I try to encourage that.

JI: What about Idle No More? Do First Nations leaders consider it when strategizing and creating change?

CPB: Idle No More, I always say, was a spiritual movement because it really opened everyone's eyes about Bill C-45. Those omnibus legislation have impacts on the land and water and INM catapulted everybody to start looking at it and working together, not only Indian people, but non-Indian people as well, because the land and the water affect the whole world. So there are really key strategic alliances that can be built -- utilizing Idle No More, there's always room for that: educating awareness and uniting our people.

Push for ojibway urban park gains steam

[Windsor Star](#)

July 12, 2013

Brian Cross

The public uprising that helped put the proposed clear-cutting

of Ojibway Shores on hold this week has spilled over and boosted a fledgling campaign to create an urban national park covering large portions of the entire Ojibway area.

"I've talked to a lot of people and produced some flyers, got some interest, and suddenly the Ojibway Woods issue became a hot potato, people were just exploding

with this issue," Anna Lynn Meloche said Thursday, referring to recent outrage over the Windsor Port Authority's plan to clearcut and infill Ojibway Shores, the last natural shoreline in Windsor. On Wednesday, the port authority put the brakes on that plan and said it wanted to look at options for preserving the 36-acre property as a natural area.

Meanwhile, the push for an urban national park in Ojibway - in West Windsor and LaSalle - has kicked into high gear, according to Meloche, who believes Ojibway Shores is one of the properties that belongs in it.

More than 560 have signed petitions and a letter campaign has begun urging the park's creation on a "willing-seller, willing-buyer basis."

Meloche isn't necessarily talking about swallowing up the 875 acres of municipally and provincially owned natural areas in Ojibway. They're

already adequately protected, so they might simply be affiliated with the new national urban park.

Meloche said she wants to expand the envelope beyond the existing parks, by acquiring lands from willing parties. She mentioned not just Ojibway Shores (owned by the port authority, a federal agency) but also the recently closed Windsor Raceway property that borders Ojibway Park, the big box property at Sprucewood and Matchette (across from the provincial prairie preserve, it's currently the subject of an Ontario Municipal Board hearing) and various woodlots

in LaSalle.

Some critics have said Windsor would have to get at the back of the line when it comes to approval for a new national park, but Meloche argues: "Who is at more risk of losing its environment than this area here?" She said Windsor-Essex has the least protected area of any region in Canada, and that the Ojibway complex, with its tall grass prairie and Carolinian woods, has the highest biodiversity and most endangered species in Canada. Development pressures around the existing natural areas are threatening the complex with

further fragmentation - one of the biggest enemies of habitat, she said.

The ideas are still being formed and people are free to make suggestions, said Meloche, who believes the creation of the park would help put an end to the continued development pressures that threaten the area. "We know how valuable it is, I think we just have to nudge levels of government that haven't paid much attention to southern Ontario." Attempts to get a comment from federal Environment Minister Peter Kent or his spokeswoman were not successful Thursday.

MP Brian Masse (NDP - Windsor West) said the petitions show the broad support for the environment that was on display at the public meeting last week on Ojibway Shores, where hundreds packed the meeting hall.

"We really do need to improve our environment down here, we all know that; I think that's why Ojibway Shores has seized so many people," said Masse, who's holding a news conference on a related issue this morning in the Black Oak Heritage Park just south of Ojibway Shores.

The proposal is being modelled after the first urban national

park in Canada, currently being developed in the massive Rouge area on the eastern edge of Toronto. The Ojibway proposal's website is ojibwaynationalurbanpark.ca.

The urban park idea is an interesting solution for the Ojibway area, said Derek Coronado of the Citizens Environment Alliance, whose organization has yet to

examine it in detail. Part of the reason people are getting behind it, he said, "is in Canada, without any kind of constitutional protection for the environment, the highest level of protection you can get is a national park."

bcross@windsorstar.com

Quebec Innu brutally assaulted by provincial police officers

[Global News](#)

July 18, 2013

Amanda Kelly



A still from the YouTube video that shows the assault of Norbert Mestenapeo, a young Innu man, by Quebec provincial police.
MrTherio6/YouTube

MONTREAL – Quebec provincial police are investigating after a young First Nations man was violently assaulted by two police officers.

[View Larger Map](#)

The assault took place in the isolated community of La Romaine, an Innu First Nations reserve that is part of the Unamen Shipu band in the Cote-Nord region of Quebec.

Nathalie Girard, a spokesperson for the Surete du Quebec (SQ) confirmed that an incident took place in La Romaine last Tuesday.

"On the 16th of July, a citizen called to report a disturbance in a residence in La Romaine," she told Global News. "I would describe it as noise and the sounds of a fight."

She confirmed that later, a second call was received that evening, reporting another altercation and police were sent to the scene.

It was there that they encountered 24-year-old Norbert Mestenapeo and this happened:

Warning: The video content may be disturbing to some readers

The disturbing video was shot from a car across the street from the incident. It shows two Quebec provincial police officers violently assaulting a man in the middle of a dusty road.

He is repeatedly beaten with a baton and pummelled with fists. At one point the officers lift the man up to a standing position, only to throw him to the ground and continue the assault. At no point during the video does the man appear to resist.

According to reports, when police arrived at the scene, they advised Mestenapeo they had a warrant for his arrest. He apparently argued with the officers, who then assaulted him.

The Quebec provincial police force has confirmed that it is launching two separate investigations into the alleged assault in La Romaine.

"The investigations will not be conducted by colleagues who worked directly with one another," Girard confirmed.

One will look into how the police officers conducted themselves and the other is a criminal investigation. Both will be conducted by the SQ.

"That's not normal procedure," noted criminal defence attorney Eric Sutton. "When there's a complaint of police abuse, it's always a different police force that conducts the investigation."

According to the Quebec Ombudsman, typically in such cases, the Public Security Ministry entrusts the investigation to a police force other than the one involved in the incident. When the police force completes its investigation, it submits a report to the Director of Criminal and Penal Prosecutions, who decides whether or not criminal prosecution is warranted.

The brutal attack has outraged First Nations leaders, police chiefs and community members.

"In my community we are a peace-loving people, and as Chief of Unamen Shipu, I do not accept that my population be treated in this manner," said Chief Raymond Bellefleur [in a statement](#).

"Our elders are frightened, and our youths and women are terrified by police brutality. That has to stop now. Our policing services must be restored very quickly."

The response of William Moffat, the Treasurer for the [First Nations Chiefs of Police Association \(FNCPA\)](#) was unequivocal.

"I looked at the video, one word, unacceptable!" he said via email. "Observed one officer striking Norbert Mestenapeo with a baton and the second officer striking in the facial area. Both officers striking in the red zone area, unacceptable."

I am sure both police officers were trained properly by ENPQ to use proper techniques. Both officers did not follow protocol."

As for next steps?

"I would recommend an outside police agency should investigate the incident such as the RCMP or OPP . . . Looking at the video reminds me of the 1981 crisis in Listuguj, QC."

Henry Vicaire agrees. He is the chief of police in Listuguj Mi'gmaq First Nation in Quebec.

"It was pretty brutal," he told Global News. "Not the sort of thing taught in basic training. I found it quite excessive."

"There's been a problem with First Nations policing and it's always due to lack of funding. If this was handled by our own people, things like this don't happen.

"Most communities have First Nations police forces but due to lack of funding and poor working conditions . . . crazy hours, very low pay, lack of equipment, housing for officers – we're not funded for that."

[Read More: Third-world conditions taking high toll on First Nations police force](#)

La Romaine is a remote First Nations community, accessible only by boat or plane. Until recently, it's approximately 1000 residents were served by a First Nations police force and the Surete du Quebec (SQ) played only "a complementary role alongside the Native nations' police forces."

However, the First Nations' police force has been dramatically reduced after cuts introduced by the Federal and provincial governments and, like in many other isolated Aboriginal communities, in Unamen Shipu, the Surete du Quebec recently took over after the First Nations police force had to be shut down.

Jean Paul Duval, a spokesperson for Public Safety Canada, said that policing services within each province and territory of Canada are the "responsibility of that respective province or territory."

According to Duval, First Nations Policing Program (FNPP) funded policing services are "intended to supplement, but not replace, provincial police services."

[Read more: Provincial police forces brace for cuts as federal fund winds up](#)

But in the case of the community where Norbert Mestenapeo was allegedly attacked?

"The region of La Romaine received FNPP funding from 1996-2007," he said via email. "The Surete du Quebec has been the sole service provider in the region of La Romaine since 2007."

The change has had a profound impact.

"In the Algonquin community of Lac Simon, our police force is constantly threatened by decisions of the two governments. Our people, especially our women, don't want our police force to come to an end and they are afraid of police brutality," Salomé McKenzie, Chief of the Lac Simon Algonquin community, said in a statement.

"As Chief of my community, I will pursue my efforts to make sure my community is safe and served by police officers who understand our reality."

This is something that FNCPA treasurer William Moffat agreed with wholeheartedly.

"First Nation policing is needed in all First Nation communities," said Moffat. "Are we able to police ourselves? The answer is yes. Do we have the training and expertise? The answer is yes. Do we have the funding? Answer is no!"

According to Duval, for 2013-14, there are 21 self-administered policing agreements in Quebec, covering 38 communities for a total federal investment of approximately \$28.4 million.

"On March 4, 2013, the federal government announced the renewal of the First Nations Policing Program with associated funding of \$612.4M over five years. Federal officials have begun discussions with First Nation and Inuit communities and the province of Quebec toward four-year FNPP agreements, to begin in 2014-2015."

[Read more: First Nations police force to fold without more funding](#)

Quebec Minister of Public Security Stephane Bergeron would not provide a direct comment, but a spokesperson for his office confirmed that the Minister is following the situation closely.

"The outlook in First Nation policing does not look good in the future, current agreements are being forced upon us, take it or lose your department," said Moffat.

Vicaire agrees. "Promises are usually made, but it's slow. It all comes down to dollars."

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Hungry Aboriginal Kids Were Subject Of Nutritional experiments: Paper

[Montreal Gazette](#)

Jul. 16 2013, 1:16 PM EDT

Bob Weber



Recently published historical research says hungry aboriginal children and adults were once used as unwitting subjects in nutritional experiments by Canadian government bureaucrats.

"This was the hardest thing I've ever written," said Ian Mosby, who has revealed new details about one of the least-known but perhaps most disturbing aspects of government policy toward aboriginals immediately after the Second World War.

Mosby – whose work at the University of Guelph focuses on the history of food in Canada – was researching the development of health policy when he ran across something strange.

"I started to find vague references to studies conducted on 'Indians' that piqued my interest and seemed potentially problematic, to say the least," he said. "I went on a search to find out what was going on."

Government documents eventually revealed a long-standing, government-run experiment that came to span the entire country and involved at least 1,300 aboriginals, most of them children.

It began with a 1942 visit by government researchers to a number of remote reserve communities in northern Manitoba, including places such as The Pas and Norway House.

They found people who were hungry, beggared by a combination of the collapsing fur trade and declining government support. They also found a demoralized population marked by, in the words of the researchers, "shiftlessness, indolence, improvidence and inertia."

The researchers suggested those problems – "so long regarded as inherent or hereditary traits in the Indian race" – were in fact the results of malnutrition.

Instead of recommending an increase in support, the researchers decided that isolated, dependent, hungry people would be ideal subjects for tests on the effects of different diets.

"This is a period of scientific uncertainty around nutrition," Mosby said. "Vitamins and minerals had really only been discovered during the interwar period.

"In the 1940s, there were a lot of questions about what are human requirements for vitamins. Malnourished aboriginal people became viewed as possible means of testing these theories."

The first experiment began in 1942 on 300 Norway House Cree. Of that group, 125 were selected to receive vitamin supplements that were withheld from the rest.

At the time, researchers calculated the local people were living on less than 1,500 calories a day. Normal, healthy adults generally require at least 2,000.

"The research team was well aware that these vitamin supplements only addressed a small part of the problem," Mosby writes. "The experiment seems to have been driven, at least in part, by the nutrition experts' desire to test their theories on a ready-made 'laboratory' populated with already malnourished human experimental subjects."

The research spread. In 1947, plans were developed for research on about 1,000 hungry aboriginal children in six residential schools in Port Alberni, B.C., Kenora, Ont., Schubunacadie, N.S., and Lethbridge, Alta.

One school deliberately depressed milk rations for two years to less than half the recommended amount to get a 'baseline' reading for when the allowance was increased. At another, children were divided into one group that received vitamin, iron and iodine supplements and one that didn't.

One school depressed levels of vitamin B1 to create another baseline before levels were boosted. A special enriched flour that couldn't legally be sold elsewhere in Canada under food adulteration laws was used on children at another school.

And, so that all the results could be properly measured, one school was allowed none of those supplements.

Many dental services were withdrawn from participating schools during that time. Gum health was an important measuring tool for scientists and they didn't want treatments on children's teeth distorting results.

The experiments, repugnant today, would probably have been considered ethically dubious even at the time, said Mosby.

"I think they really did think they were helping people. Whether they thought they were helping the people that were actually involved in the studies, that's a different question."

He noted that rules for research on humans were just being formulated and adopted by the scientific community.

Little has been written about the nutritional experiments. A May, 2000, article in the Anglican Journal about some of them was the only reference Mosby could find.

"I assumed that somebody would have written about an experiment conducted on aboriginal people during this period, and kept being surprised when I found more details and the scale of it. I was really, really surprised.

"It's an emotionally difficult topic to study."

Not much was learned from those hungry little bodies. A few papers were published – "they were not very helpful," Mosby said – and he couldn't find evidence that the research program was completed.

"They knew from the beginning that the real problem and the cause of malnutrition was underfunding. That was established before the studies even started and when the studies were completed that was still the problem."

First Nations chiefs hold dissenting gathering as Atleo's leadership is under scrutiny

[Globe and Mail](#)

Jul. 15 2013, 8:30 PM EDT

Gloria Galloway



Shawn Atleo, national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, gives an interview at his Ottawa office on June 19, 2013. (DAVE CHAN FOR THE GLOBE AND MAIL)

A dissenting group of chiefs, angry with the slow pace of treaty negotiations and the conduct of the leadership of the Assembly of First Nations, is gathering in Saskatchewan this week to talk about forming a splinter group, even as national chief Shawn Atleo holds the AFN's national meeting in Whitehorse.

But some of those who will be with Mr. Atleo in the Yukon capital are calling for a re-examination of his leadership after two meetings he had this year with Prime Minister Stephen Harper put him at odds with a number of the leaders of the First Nations he represents.

Alvin Fiddler, the deputy grand chief of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation in Northern Ontario, will arrive in Whitehorse with a motion that aims to strengthen the National Chief's accountability to his people. It calls on the AFN's Council of Elders to investigate the events leading up to a contentious meeting on Jan. 11 between Mr. Atleo and Mr. Harper – one that took place during the hunger strike of Attawapiskat Chief Theresa Spence and over the objection of many chiefs who said it was not being held on their terms. The motion also asks the elders to look into another meeting between Mr. Atleo and Mr. Harper in June about which, according to the motion's preamble, the chiefs were "kept in the dark."

"I think we have concerns with the AFN, with the national chief, in terms of how he's conducted himself, especially to do with these meetings with the Prime Minister. They are almost like secret meetings. We don't hear about them until after the fact through the media," Mr. Fiddler said Monday. "There has to be a greater transparency at this point, and accountability back to our leadership and back to our communities about what this organization is doing for us."

Mr. Fiddler's motion is being entered late and it is unclear whether the chiefs attending the meeting will allow it to be heard. But it is representative of a frustration with Mr. Atleo that has been expressed by a number of First Nations leaders – and which was being voiced last year before he was re-elected to a second three-year term with a strong mandate.

The AFN is an advocacy group that represents the diverse interests of Canada's 614 First Nations, but has no authority to negotiate directly on their behalf when it comes to settling issues that affect individual communities, including treaty rights and the sharing of resource revenue.

Some of the chiefs who are boycotting the meeting in Whitehorse by attending the one in Saskatchewan accuse Mr. Atleo of overstepping those bounds. And Derek Nepinak, grand chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, is proposing the creation of a new group called the National Treaty Alliance.

But Mr. Atleo, who denies negotiating for the First Nations, will give a speech Tuesday to the chiefs gathered in the Yukon saying this is a time for them to stand strong and unified.

"We have an inherent responsibility to our lands, waters and peoples – and we have inherent rights as nations to work in full respect with one another and as equal partners with other governments," he will say in the speech, a copy of which was distributed to some media outlets. "Across all areas and territories we can work together based on respect for our diversity while supporting one another on a path to our shared goals. We will not play the old games of divide and conquer."

Nutritional tests on hungry aboriginals

[Global News](#)

July 18, 2013

Bob Weber



A nurse takes a blood sample from a boy at the Indian School, Port Alberni, B.C., in 1948, during the time when nutritional experiments were being conducted on students there and five other residential schools. The Canadian Press/Library and Archive Canada/Handout

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bureaucrats.

"This was the hardest thing I've ever written," said Ian Mosby, who has revealed new details about one of the least-known but perhaps most disturbing aspects of government policy toward aboriginals immediately after the Second World War.

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The researchers suggested those problems — “so long regarded as inherent or hereditary traits in the Indian race” — were in fact the results of malnutrition.

Instead of recommending an increase in support, the researchers decided that isolated, dependent, hungry people would be ideal subjects for tests on the effects of different diets.

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He noted that rules for research on humans were just being formulated and adopted by the scientific community.

A spokeswoman for Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt said the current federal government is shocked by the findings.

"If this story is true, this is abhorrent and completely unacceptable," Andrea Richer said in an email. "When Prime Minister (Stephen) Harper made a historic apology to former students of Indian Residential Schools in 2008 on behalf of all Canadians, he recognized that this period had caused great harm and had no place in Canada."

Little has been written about the nutritional experiments. A May 2000 article in the Anglican Journal about some of them was the only reference Mosby could find.

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Partnering with First Nations to come to terms with past neglect

[Ottawa Citizen](#)

18 July 2013 13:25

Bernie Farber

With this week's shocking revelations that during the 1940s and 1950s our federal government deliberately starved aboriginal children to use them as guinea pigs for nutritional experiments, we once again must confront our malicious mistreatment of First Nations. Sadly, the list of abuses is long.

The history of the Grassy Narrows reserve in northwestern Ontario was another inflicted tragedy that we must face with shame.

In the early 1960s, the Dryden Chemical Company in Dryden, Ont., ran a process plant, which emitted sodium hydroxide and chlorine. This was used in the process of bleaching paper during production.

The company then discharged their liquid sewage waste, tonnes of it, into the nearby Wabigoon-English river system. This poisoned not only the water, but eventually the fish as well. Of course, fish was the main source of food and nutrients for the Grassy Narrows Reserve, not to mention the related fishing tourism industry.

The result was a multi-generational legacy of deformed infants, brain damaged as they grow older and possibly dying a painful death well before they should.

Is it any wonder, then, that First Nations became less and less trusting of government and officials who were responsible for their well-being? This has led Grassy Narrows, like other reserves, to a stunning withdrawal from society, one that might have been difficult to overcome.

However, 50 years after big business poured tonnes of poisonous mercury into the Wabigoon-English river system while the rest of us turned away and did nothing, the river and the land have found a way to give back.

Dr. Michael Dan, a former neurosurgeon, is today a progressive philanthropist and businessman. His father Leslie Dan was a Holocaust survivor who founded the drug company Novopharm. And Michael Dan's own maternal family benefited from the friendship of the First Nations when the family first settled in the St. Boniface area of Manitoba. He has, over the years, parlayed his personal wealth towards helping First Nations create sustainable industries on their reserves.

His idea that sustainable, multi-generational wealth can be leveraged into greater economic development for the First Nation is beginning to take hold. Dan will spend months of his time talking, explaining and building trust with aboriginal communities. He has been known to traverse the waterways of traditional territories by canoe with local chiefs for days at a time surveying land and water for potential industrial possibilities.

His easygoing manner and patience has been rewarded by First Nations communities. He has been bestowed with two Anishinabe names and given the honour of an eagle feather. Indeed, few non-aboriginals have been so trusted.

Discussions are underway with the Grassy Narrows First Nations and Dr. Michael Dan through his Gemini Power Corp. to use their traditional waterways to potentially create safe, clean hydroelectric power and to use their poplar trees to veneer compostable wooden utensils that don't pollute like plastic.

One method is through the development of small hydro plants in partnership with the private sector leading to 100 per cent ownership by the First Nations. First Nations traditional territory has the few geological resources in rivers and waterfalls needed to sustain such development.

The other is through veneering trees to make compostable wooden utensils as an alternative to the 100 billion disposable plastic utensils landfilled each year. Known as "Aspenware," it is made from sustainably harvested underutilized trembling aspen, paper birch and poplar which naturally reseed when felled. This material was historically wasted during regular softwood harvesting practices. A single log can yield up to 25,000 knives, forks or spoons.

Such plants are the underpinning of economic activity giving ongoing employment opportunities a real pride of ownership and could bring wealth to reserves, such as Grassy Narrows, which historically have been close to destitute.

These partnerships help to restore trust and bring dignity back to those we treated with such disdain.

In a recent interview on the veneering project published in the Toronto Star, former national chief of the Assembly of First Nations Phil Fontaine lauded the partnership as "an excellent opportunity for aboriginal communities." He went on to explain, "Anything that is about placing responsibility and through that, achieving real significant benefits for First Nations, is the way to go."

We have driven First Nations from their traditional lands, kidnapped and experimented on their children, poisoned their waters and trampled their rights. It is time to find ways to compensate for past wrongs by partnering with aboriginal reserves in helping them to build sustainable industries. Such actions will lead to healthy and long needed changes.

Bernie M. Farber is senior vice-president of Gemini Power Corp. working to help First Nations Reserves develop sustainable industries on their traditional territories.